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ABSTRACT

Total Quality Management (TQM) has become popular in many educational settings in recent years. TQM was initiated at Shiloh High School in the Gwinnett County (Georgia) Public Schools as a part of a strategic plan that guarantees individual student success. Shiloh Principal J. Patrick Mahon recognized TQM's usefulness in carrying out a strategic plan and establishing leadership. Mahon was using Carl Glickman's shared governance concepts in planning for the school. The school created 10 cross-disciplinary teams to promote faculty camaraderie and input into decision making. Volunteer task forces were also created using TQM to address particular issues. Each team also elects one member to the Shared Leadership Council (SLC). A large part of each monthly SLC meeting is devoted to sharing the components of TQM. The statistics and tools of TQM also are helpful. For example, records on discipline referrals helped show how quickly the school is dealing with discipline problems. The SLC also did a force-field analysis of impediments to school restructuring. TQM forces leaders to think systematically. It cannot be looked upon as a quick fix or the answer to all of a school's problems. TQM and shared governance are processes for systemic and incremental change. (JPT)

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ED 368 062

# Shared Leadership and TQM

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**NASSP Convention**
**New Orleans LA**
**Saturday, February 19, 1994**
**3:15-4:15 p.m.**

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It goes without saying that Total Quality Management (TQM) has made some inroads into the educational arena within the past year or two. The concepts and practices of TQM offer many advantages for educational settings. In this paper, I want to share with my colleagues how one principal in one school has tried to introduce TQM.

My initial interest in TQM came from my instinct for survival. Shiloh High School is part of the Gwinnett County Public Schools which is a dynamic school system driven by a quest for excellence. As a result we have many new strategies and initiatives. We have been operating under a strategic plan for about three years. The strategic plan guarantees individual student success. This is a hefty mandate in and of itself.

The strategic plan also has driven the restructuring of the Gwinnett County Schools. Changing paradigms at any level is not easy. It is much more difficult at the high school where we are locked in by demands from post-secondary institutions and the business community.

After several introductory workshops, I began to see that TQM spelled "relief." The statistical tools would enable me to make some sense out of the restructured plate on my desk. I could get it all together and remember where I had put it. I was not all wrong but I was wrong.

Having read both of Juran's books (They cost a little less than books by Deming.) and The Team Handbook and relying on The Memory Jogger, The Memory Jogger for Education and The Memory Jogger +, I discovered that TQM was not primarily a matter of statistics and tools. TQM was what leadership in schools is all about. It is about working effectively with people in order to meet and exceed the needs of our customers

and stakeholders. TQM focuses on quality and people striving for quality because they are empowered or enabled or whatever you want to call it. The simple fact is that teachers are leaders and need to have input into decisions which affect them and their ability to meet the needs of their students.

About this time, I was meeting with my leadership team at our summer conference in Athens. Even though he was not present, Carl Glickman's shared governance concepts were infiltrating our discussions. Shiloh has a large faculty--116 certificated people this year. These people represent numerous disciplines, subjects and specialties. It has not been unusual for a more experienced faculty member to ask a new first year teacher for a hall pass! "But, I'm a teacher." "Oh, I've never met you."

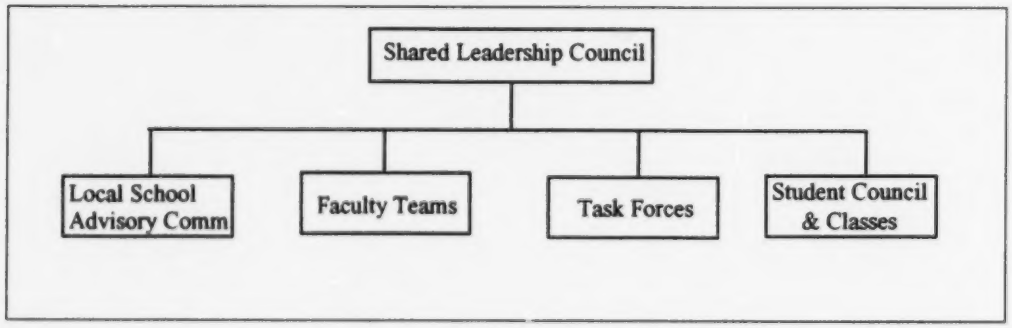
In order to promote faculty camaraderie and input into decision making, we modified Glickman's model to meet our needs. Gary Brown, our administrative assistant, who is in an administrative preparation program, volunteered to set up our teams. What he put in place resulted in the establishment of ten cross-disciplinary or cross-functional teams. Administrators and counselors were assigned to various teams. It certainly is different to sit in a team and make an effort to be a member. I am fortunate because my team pretty much lets me be a member. As one teammate said in the first meeting, "Take off the principal's hat, loosen your tie and remember that you are one of us." " OK!"

The teams, as mentioned, were to serve two purposes. First, we encouraged members of the teams to create opportunities to socialize and to get to know one another better. After school socials and breakfasts have been the most common events. Second, the teams are to meet at least once a month to provide input into schoolwide decisions.

In addition to the teams, we have also created task forces which are comprised of volunteers. The task forces are ad hoc groups which address particular issues like student management and curriculum. After six months of shared leadership and TQM, these task force reports are starting to have a significant impact on school operations.

Each team elects one member to serve on the Shared Leadership Council (SLC). I am the eleventh member of the council; however, I have invoked no veto power. When an issue comes to the council, it takes eleven votes for it to become part of our policy and/or procedures. If it fails to get eleven votes, it placed in a task force for further study and recommendations. This is but one of the bylaws which the SLC adopted at its first meeting.

The SLC can take recommendations from the teacher teams, task forces, the

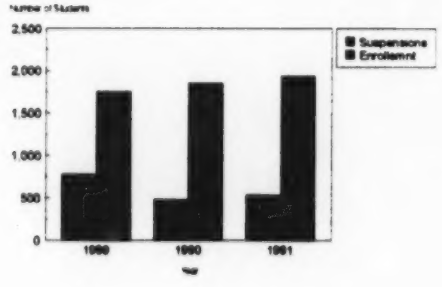



parent's Local School Advisory Committee, the student council and the officers from any grade level.

The first issue to be presented came from the senior class. The seniors proposed that the exam exemption policy which allows students with an average of 90 or better and no more than three excused absences and no in or out of school suspension to exempt exams with their parents' approval. The seniors were proposing that any senior with a 70

average (passing grade) and five absences be exempted. The SLC unanimously rejected this proposal. The seniors later resubmitted their proposal but with modifications. The SLC changed some of the components and decided that seniors with an 83 average and who had met the attendance and discipline requirements listed above could exempt exams.

A large part of each monthly SLC meeting is dedicated to sharing the components of TQM with the members of the SLC. This has the advantage of having the members learn the concepts and then being able to apply them to resolve practical problems. For example, the graphs and charts associated with TQM can help keep the SLC informed about school related issues. The chart on In-School Suspension gave the Council information on school discipline.




Communication and teamwork which I see as the key ingredients of TQM are enhanced by having members report on the concerns which have arisen in their team. This is the tedious part of TQM. The principal has to exercise a great deal of patience and persistence. Issues like roaches in the coach's offices which can be resolved immediately by reporting the problems to the appropriate administrator have to be dealt with initially;

however, for the long haul, the members have to learn that the SLC is not a gripe forum. Its main purpose is to provide a two-way forum for resolving issues which affect our ability to achieve our mission. In fact, developing a mission statement, or revising the current vision statement, is something which will be done eventually. The principal has to use as much skill and diplomacy as possible to move the group beyond the initial stages of forming and storming to norming and performing.

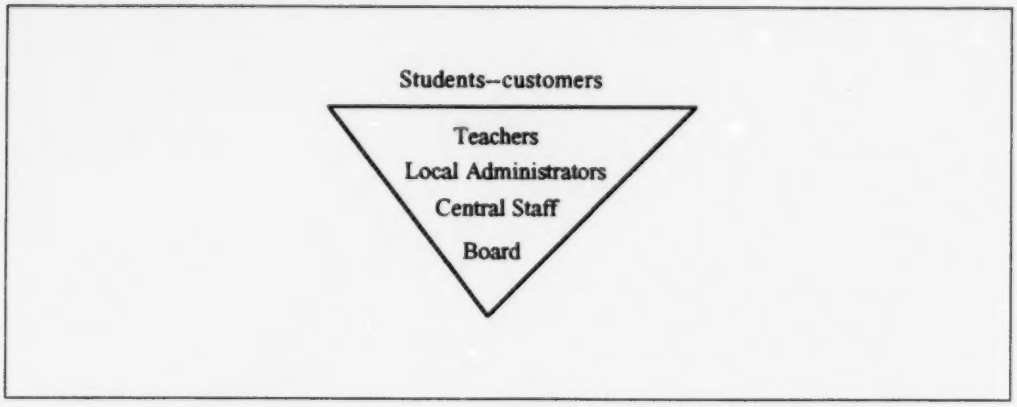
The statistics and tools from TQM do come into play and are very useful. In several meetings members had reported concerns about the time it was taking administrators to deal with discipline issues and to report back to the teachers. I pulled 217 discipline referrals which had been acted upon recently. The data and the resulting graph showed that the vast majority of our discipline referrals were being handled efficiently. In fact, 93 of the 217 had been dealt with on the day on which they had occurred. Showing the graph to the members of the SLC indicated that the cycle time on referrals was within acceptable limits. This statistical tool helped people see that turnaround was not the problem. The concern was then referred to the student management team for further review.

For me, it raised a whole other issue. The majority of referrals dealt with tardiness. Whether four degreed and experienced administrators should be spending so much time on tardiness is another issue which we need to resolve. Is tardiness a factory paradigm or does something really happen to most workers in 1993 when they are late for work? At least, we are asking questions about some of our paradigms which may be in need of change.

The SLC also did a force field analysis on factors which were getting in the way of our restructuring efforts. The top five issues dealt with the willingness of teachers to change, the willingness of students to be responsible for their own learning , increasing parental involvement and technology and time to do the job. The SLC will deal with these issues in a priority order over a long period of time.

Trust is the glue in any organization. Effective communication over a period of time builds trust. A school secretary attends every meeting of the SLC and detailed minutes (2 to 3 pages) are typed and given to every staff member.

Some of the initial blockages which need to be dealt with are critical. It did not take long for people to realize that TQM takes more time than the decision making models they have been used to. Deciding what issues are appropriate for the process is part of the learning process. There are management issues which can be left to the managers. There




are other issues which need to be dealt with at the most appropriate level. Notice that I did not say the "lowest" level because lower is not the issue. TQM inverts the pyramid and places students at the top. They are the customers.

The teachers are the ones primarily responsible for meeting or exceeding their needs. Administrators, central staff members and boards of education are at the bottom because they support quality learning.

We are now in our second year of shared governance and TQM. It seems to be more difficult to implement the concepts during this year. First, there has been a major upheaval in our school system over the strategic plan which is based on 34 outcomes. Due to budget problems, employees did not get a raise for this school year and this has impacted morale. Third, teachers expressed more concerns about our flexible time schedule which has extended class periods (90 minutes) three days per week. Finally, there is a divergence of opinion on the faculty with regard to issues related to disciplinary procedures.

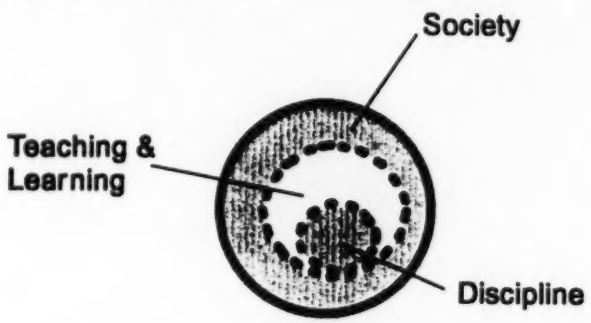
Fortunately, I am now enrolled in 80 hours of Total Quality Leader training at Gwinnett Technical Institute. It will be necessary to implement not only the concepts of TQM but also the tools. Out first effort with the tools was to develop a flow chart which outlines the disciplinary process. This already has helped us to see some problems in the system itself.

Also, with regard to discipline, we now have extensive records for the first semester which we can analyze and use Pareto Charts to identify priorities. By using these tools, we can engage in the dialogue which will enable us to come to a consensus on discipline.

Speaking in TQM terms, referring to students/parents as "customers" startles many educators. Traditionally, we have not thought of our role in this manner. It also is

difficult for administrators to realize that teachers and other employees are our customers. We should, however, use the terminology because it focuses us on stewardship and service. It begins to create an atmosphere where professionals can learn and grow.

I also want to point out that TQM forces leaders to think systemically. Discipline is not an end in itself. It is part of a larger system we call "teaching and learning." Naturally, it is also part of a larger system we call society. I do not think we will solve our discipline problems without involving people from the larger systems into our discussions, especially with regard to issues related to violence and tardiness.




**Discipline: A Systemic View**

Another powerful TQM concept is the Cost of Quality (COQ). Applying the COQ analysis to our discipline process indicates that our present system may be costing upwards of $150,000 given administrative time, teaching time and clerical work. As we dialogue about restructuring the process, we can decide how this time can be better used to serve the needs of all our customers.

After I had introduced the TQM concept at the first Local School Advisory Committee meeting, a member of that committee brought all of us a copy of a newspaper

article which said that many organizations were abandoning TQM because it was not producing the desired results. At the root of this thinking is the American penchant for quick fixes. The quarterly profits or the SAT scores are down. Someone comes up with a quick fix, in this case TQM. The profits fall or do not rise significantly or the SAT scores decline or do not rise enough and every one immediately concludes that TQM does not work. It does not work as a quick fix. TQM is grounded on the Japanese concept of Kaizen which means continuous incremental improvement. It is very hard for Americans, especially legislators, to look at the long view. TQM is a systematic approach to continuous improvement. The emphasis is on the process.

I cannot stress enough that TQM and shared governance are processes. They are not quick fixes. In fact, revising as you move along is part of the process. Based on feedback we have received from individual teachers and teams, we already have designed some revisions for next year. Team meetings for all teams will be on a designated day each month. This is because allowing teams the opportunity to schedule their own meetings has worked a hardship on teachers because of other commitments. We will not select new teams and new elected representatives next year. In order to provide for continuity and carryover in the process, we will keep the membership on the teams constant. The same people will represent the teams on the SLC; however, in the fall, the representatives will draw straws so that a three year rotation of members can begin the following year.

Educators who are interested in learning more about TQM should consult the sources listed in the bibliography. In addition many educational institutions are beginning

to offer courses on TQM. By reading widely taking appropriate courses, the practicing administrator can lead his/her school through the TQM process.

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